

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 DHA-02 AID-05 ARAE-00 PC-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2455

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: MANAGUA 0482

1. FOLLOWING IS MESSAGE DRAFTED AT BEGINNING OF WEEK BUT WAS HELD FOR FURTHER VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION. IN LIGHT OF MARCH 2 NEW YORK TIMES STORY BY RIDING, IT IS BEING SENT AS IS AND WILL BE SUPPLEMENTED AS FURTHER INFORMATION IS DEVELOPED.

2. SUMMARY. EMB HAS BEEN TOLD BY AMERICAN CAPUCHIN PRIESTS OF ALLEGED RECENT LARGE SCALE MASSACRES OF CAMPESINOS BY NATIONAL GUARD (GN). THE GN DESCRIBES THE INFORMATION AS A RUMOR, DENIES ITS VERACITY AND ATTRIBUTES IT TO "COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA." END SUMMARY.

3. EMB RECENTLY HEARD OF RECENT UNSPECIFIED SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS (MEMCON OF 2/14 MEETING WITH DR. JARQUIN). IN FOLLOW-UP
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TO THE PRESUMED SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION, EMBOFF MET WITH CAPUCHIN PRIESTS ON 2/24 (MEMCON BEING SENT) AND WAS TOLD OF TWO SEPARATE RECENT INCIDENTS WHICH, IF TRUE, WOULD CONSTITUTE VERY SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. IN ONE INCIDENT IN DECEMBER, GN REPORTEDLY ROUNDED UP AND KILLED 42 CAMPESINOS IN AN AREA IN ZELAYA DEPARTMENT CALLED KASKITA. CAPUCHIN SOURCE WAS CAMPESINOS IN NEARBY AREA WHO SAID SOURCE OF THEIR INFORMATION WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO CLAIMED TO

BE A SURVIVOR WHO WAS LEADING SURVIVING CHILDREN OUT OF THE AREA. SECOND INCIDENT IN JANUARY ALSO IN ZELAYA IN PLACE CALLED VARILLAL CONCERNED SIMILAR INCIDENT IN WHICH FOUR MEN, ELEVEN WOMEN AND 29 CHILDREN

REPORTEDLY WERE ROUNDED UP BY GN AND KILLED. CAPUCHIN SOURCE WAS CAMPESINOS WHO LIVED NEARBY AND REPORTED HAVING SEEN THESE PERSONS BEING BROUGHT INTO AREA BY GN, BUT GN HAD LEFT WITHOUT PRISONERS WHO WERE NOT SEEN AGAIN. CAPUCHINS SAID THIS INCIDENT WAS PRESUMABLY SAME INCIDENT WHICH FOREIGN PRESS HAD REPORTED AS BOMBING OF COMMUNITY OF VARILLON, SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED BY GON PRESS SECRETARY (REFTEL). CAPUCHINS SAID, HOWEVER, NONE OF CAMPESINOS THEY HAD TALKED TO HAD SEEN ANY PLANES OR BOMBING.

4. AREAS IN QUESTION ARE SO ISOLATED THAT APPARENTLY THE ONLY RESIDENTS ARE SCATTERED CAMPESINOS WHO ARE VISITED OCCASIONALLY BY MILITARY PATROLS AND PERHAPS SOME FSLN UNITS. THE ONLY APPARENT OUTSIDE VISITORS ARE CAPUCHIN PRIESTS WHO CIRCUIT-RIDE IN THE AREA.

5. ALLAN RIDING, A NEW YORK TIMES STRINGER WHO HAS JUST COMPLETED FOUR-DAY VISIT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON NICARAGUAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, OBTAINED SAME INFORMATION FROM CAPUCHINS ON FEB. 25 AND IS BASIS FOR HIS MARCH 2 STORY.

6. ON FEB. 28, POLOFF RAISED ALLEGATION OF THESE MASS VIOLATIONS WITH GEN. PEREZ VEGA, GN-2. PEREZ CATEGORICALLY DENIED THE REPORT, DESCRIBING IT AS TYPICAL OF COMMUNIST-FSLN INSPIRED PROPAGANDA DESIGNED TO EMBARRASS THE GON. HE DENIED SUCH INCIDENTS COULD HAVE HAPPENED UNBEKNOWN BY HIM.

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7. COMMENT: EMB IS UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHOSE VERSION IS LIKELY TO BE CORRECT. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT CAPUCHIN PRIESTS ARE ACCURATELY REPORTING WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD AND THAT THEY BELIEVE THEIR CAMPESINO SOURCES BELIEVE THE ALLEGATIONS. THE REPORTS ARE SECOND OR THIRD HAND, AND THERE APPARENTLY ARE NO EYE WITNESSES TO GN KILLINGS WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE WOMAN AND CHILDREN WHO WERE DESCRIBED AS THE SURVIVORS OF THE REPORTED MASSACRE AT KASKITA. THE EMB HAS IN THE PAST CONSIDERED THE CAPUCHIN PRIESTS TO BE THE BEST INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF INFORMATION REGARDING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ISOLATED NORTHERN AREAS OF NICARAGUA. HOWEVER, THIS REPORT IS OF A DIFFERENT NATURE FROM THEIR PREVIOUS DETAILED INFORMATION ON DISAPPEARANCES OF INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES IN THAT THIS TIME THEY DO NOT HAVE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF POSSIBLE OCCURRENCE OF INCIDENTS.

8. EMB WILL COMMENT BY SEPTTEL ON RIDING STORY.
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